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FACTS AND FIGURES

REALIZATION OF 1969 STATE PLAN

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Member of the State Planning Commission

1969 saw major efforts of the North Viet Nam people. It was a year of hard and tireless work to surmount a host of difficulties to fulfil the State plan. Our small-scale and underdeveloped economy was moreover partly devastated in the four years of US imperialists' very brutal war of destruction. It has therefore been confronting us with many major problems which cannot be resolved overnight. 1969 was also a year of unstable weather in our country, marked by the worst typhoons and floods ever experienced in our history and an unusual heat in summer, to say nothing of the fact that the US imperialists, though having been forced to end their war of destruction, did not discontinue their reconnaissance flights and even bombed and strafed some localities in North Viet Nam.

In such conditions, we did our best to clear up quickly the aftermath of war, limit the damage caused by natural calamities while striving to boost production with a view to better cater for the frontline and improve the living conditions

of our people. To this end, we have been striving to maintain the war-time mode of life and give fuller play to the new production relations chiefly by relying on the ardent patriotism and the zeal of our people, and also on the valuable assistance of the fraternal socialist countries and friends in all continents. The stirring emulation movement in production and work to put into practice President Ho Chi Minh's instructions since his death has contributed to the successful realization of the whole State Plan for 1969.

In agriculture, we continued to keep to the line of all-sided development through intensive cultivation aimed at the three goals: five tons of paddy per hectare in a year, one man-work and two pigs for each cultivated hectare. Rice acreage for the whole year was larger by about 80,000 hectares compared with 1968. In the Winter-Spring crop alone, the area under rice was 10,000 hectares more extensive than last year. Remarkably enough, in the provinces of the former Fourth Interzone (between the 16th and 17th parallels) which were the hardest hit

by enemy air and naval raids in the previous years, the population actively filled bomb craters and picked up bomb and shell splinters from the fields and consequently overfulfilled the acreage norm. 1969 witnessed new progress of the Spring rice in North Viet Nam, with an acreage nearly double and a fairly high output. The expansion of Spring rice not only brings an additional crop to our farmers and helps ease labour strain during harvest time but also gives a higher output compared with the traditionally grown Summer rice which requires a longer time to ripen and has a lower yield. The area grown with many industrial crops was also on the increase. Hog-raising ranked as an important branch in our agriculture. In 1969 our government put out a number of policies aimed at encouraging livestock-raising by the agricultural co-ops as well as co-op farmers. This, along with a better supply of food for pigs, has resulted in a continual rise of their number. Duck-breeding also made vigorous headway. Thanks to the successes in agriculture, production and life in many localities in the plain and midland

(Continued page 3)

UNITS AND FIGHTERS CITED IN NORTH AND SOUTH VIET NAM

★ On the 25th founding anniversary of the Viet Nam People's Army, the Standing Committee of the DRVN National Assembly conferred the title of "Hero-Unit" on 23 units and that of "Hero" on 17 members of the Viet Nam People's Army for the most brilliant exploits they had achieved in combat and combat support.

★ On November 23, 1969, the Council of Ministers of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Viet Nam honoured as "Hero-Unit" 28 units and as "Hero" 23 combatants of the South Viet Nam People's Liberation Armed Forces (See commentary on page 8).

*In a unit of locally-run industry
that has overfulfilled the 1969
State Plan*

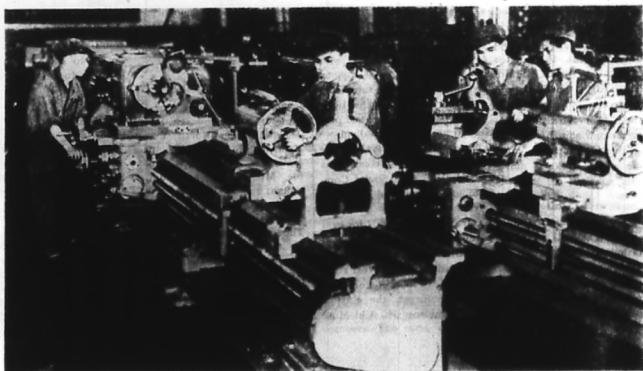
Page 2:

STALIN'S WORK

Pages 4-5:

◎ Saigon Puppet
Regime - A Creation
of US Neo-Colonial-
ism

◎ Dictatorial Regime
Revealed by American
Study Team



STALIN's WORK

— Excerpts from Nhan Dan editorial
of Dec. 21, 1969 —

STALIN's services and work have not lost their lustre. His life which included 55 years of revolutionary activity was one dedicated to revolution, to the working class, his people, his country and the noble Communist ideal. A disciple, comrade and companion-in-arms of Lenin, he was always loyal to the latter. Firmly grasping the principles set forth by Lenin, Stalin played a prominent part in organizing the fight against the Czar, landlords and capitalists for the liberation of the working class and other toiling people, in the victorious war against the reactionaries who worked hand in glove with the imperialist interventionists in provoking the civil war, in liberating the nations from Czarist oppression as well as in founding the Soviet Union, the world's first Soviet State, and in the patriotic war against fascism.

After Lenin's death, Stalin was his great successor, always upholding his glorious banner in the building of socialism and anti-capitalist enlightenment.

Stalin's role in the war against the German and Japanese fascists assumed an extremely great significance not only for the Soviet Union but also for the world revolution and the whole mankind.

In the ideological field, Stalin waged an unrelenting combat for the purity of Marxism-Leninism and development of its creative potentiality, and against opportunism under all forms. In many of his famous works, Stalin scientifically outlined and inventively applied the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism, thus enriching the theory of the international communist and workers' movement.

On a world scale, within the Communist International (1919-1943) as well as in the relations with the revolutionary movements of other countries, Stalin gave a constant and vigorous support to the international communist

and workers' movement, the movement for national independence in the colonial and semi-colonial countries and the movement for peace, democracy and social progress in any part of the world.

That is why, like the Soviet people, the entire progressive mankind highly value Stalin's services and work. The communists throughout the world regard Stalin as an eminent communist leader and a great proletarian revolutionary who intimately associated his life and name with invincible Marxism-Leninism.

Fighting under the invincible banner of Marxism-Leninism, the communists, working class and people of Viet Nam are well aware of Stalin's contribution. Sixteen years ago, after Stalin's death, President Ho Chi Minh, our leader of genius and great teacher, said to his comrades and friends in the five continents:

"It is the Soviet Red Army under Stalin's command which defeated Hitlerite fascism and Japanese militarism in World War Two and it is its victory which helped the August Revolution in Viet Nam triumph."

President Ho Chi Minh also remarked that the Soviet Union which was advancing vigorously under the leadership of the Soviet Communist Party headed by Stalin "has blazed the trail for us, opened the door for us to see the radiant future and is encouraging us to overcome all difficulties."

Since the coming into being of our Party, in the light of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism, we have realized all the more clearly Stalin's concern as leader of the Soviet Communist Party and State for the revolutionary cause of our people. We will for ever remember this famous appeal of Stalin which had wide repercussions in the West right after the October Revolution: "Don't forget the East!" As President Ho Chi Minh

pointed out, this appeal reminded the Russian people who had just won a victory and the international proletariat that they must closely link their struggle to that of the oppressed people in Asia against the common enemy — imperialism.

We consider it an historical necessity of the present epoch and a source of strength for our people to fight successfully. The better we grasp that truth, the greater our gratitude to Lenin, Stalin and the great Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

TO THE READER

We are aware that there is much room for improvement in the wording of our paper. We apologize for this shortcoming and highly appreciate all your suggestions as they will help us to serve you more efficiently in future.

US Crimes in South Viet Nam

2,000 Civilians Killed from January to December 1969 in Ben Tre

FROM January to December 1969, the Americans and their lackeys launched 3,720 "sweeps" against the free areas of Ben Tre province, Gia Phong Press Agency reported. US aircraft made 3,000 sorties and sprayed toxic chemicals on many localities. 230,000 shells were

fired on populated areas, 2,000 people most of them women, children and old-agers were killed, 1,880 others wounded and 1,000 poisoned, 2,485 dwelling houses were burnt down and tens of thousands of hectares of cropland devastated.

1,000 Civilians Killed or Reported Missing in Thang Binh and Duy Xuyen district

THE Commission for Denunciation of US-Puppet War Crimes in South Viet Nam issued on Dec. 15, 1969 a statement condemning a new crime of the US and its quillions in which nearly 1,000 people had been killed or reported missing on Nov. 12, 1969 in the districts of Thang Binh and Duy Xuyen, Quang Nam province.

ants in these two districts were layoneted or stabbed to death, burnt alive, shot dead or taken to unknown destination. In Binh Duong village alone, 210 people, mostly women, old-agers and children were massacred, 40 of them by mine explosions. All members of Mr. Quan's family in the first hamlet, including five children, were killed. In the same village, 600 people were forced into choppers and flown away.

The statement stressed that this was not the first time that the enemy had killed the inhabitants of Thang Binh and Duy Xuyen districts. In the seven months of "accelerated pacification", from November 1968 to May 1969, 1,250 people were murdered.

Nixon's

"Captured US Pilots" Ploy

THE Nixon administration continues to use the issue of the American pilots captured and detained in North Viet Nam for propaganda purposes. These moves have been denounced more than once, and lately by Ambassador Ha Van Lau, DRVN representative at the 47th session of the Paris Conference.

The American pilots who came to wreak death and destruction in North Viet Nam, have committed heinous crimes against our people. Mr. Ha Van Lau said. Caught re-handled, they are criminals subject to the jurisdiction of the DRVN. They can in no way benefit by the dispositions of the Geneva Convention on POWs. Nevertheless, prompted by a humanitarian spirit and friendly feeling toward the American people, we have

treated them humanely and generously. Some of them have been set free; the wounded and the sick have been given medical care, all of them are authorized to send post-cards to, and to receive parcels from, their families. They are also allowed to receive Christmas presents and to celebrate the occasion according to American customs. This year regulations for sending gifts have been fixed in their favour and effectively observed by the families of many of them and the parcels have safely reached the addressees.

Nevertheless, of late, some American organisations whose intention is to back Nixon's Viet Nam aggressive policy—such as the millionaire Perot's—have schemed to transgress these regulations

with flagrant provocations. They only hamper the implementation of our humanitarian and lenient policy vis-à-vis the captured pilots. Their acts are part of the smear campaign launched by the Nixon administration about these pilots, a campaign aimed at diverting American public attention from the mass movement against the US war of aggression in Viet Nam and whitewashing the US government's responsibility for the delayed settlement of the issue of captured airmen as suggested in the NFL and PRG ten-point overall solution. By turning a deaf ear to this sensible proposal of the NFL and PRG, the Washington rulers only stall the arrangement of the question just as they have been blocking the solution of the Viet Nam war.

THE NORTH — GREAT REAR BASE OF THE SOUTH

COMMEMORATION OF ARMY's 25th BIRTHDAY

● On the occasion of the 25th birthday of the Viet Nam People's Army, the Standing Committee of the DRVN National Assembly has commended the regular forces, regional forces, militia, home-guards and people's security forces "for their great contributions to the struggle for national independence and reunification and to the defence and building of the country and their fulfilment of international duties."

● The CC of the Viet Nam Workers' Party has sent a letter warmly congratulating the entire armed forces which "have been fighting, producing and working well, constantly enhancing their patriotism and internationalism, promoting revolutionary heroism, displaying boundless loyalty and great courage, and proving worthy of the trust of the Party and people and being a heroic army of a heroic nation."

● A commemorative meeting was held in Hanoi on the evening of Dec. 20, 1969 on the 25th anniversary of the founding of the Viet Nam People's Army and the 23rd anniversary of the National-Worker Resistance.

Speaking at the meeting, President Ton Duc Thang praised the people's army for having "established the glorious revolutionary tradition, namely, to be loyal to the Party, devoted to the people, prepared to fight and make every sacrifice for the independence and freedom of the Fatherland and socialism, and to accomplish any assigned task, overcome any difficulty and defeat any enemy."

After recalling President Ho Chi Minh's Testament, General Vo Nguyen Giap took, on behalf of all cadres and fighters of the people's armed forces, the following pledge to Party and State leaders and people's representatives: "Confident of the bright future of the Nation, the Vietnamese people's armed forces swear to stiffen their resolve to fight and win, enhance revolutionary heroism, undergo intense training, constantly increase vigilance, develop fighting power, unite closely around the CC of the VNWP and together with the entire people, completely defeat the US aggressors, liberate South Viet Nam, defend the North and achieve the ultimate peaceful reunification of the country."

● An exhibition of some achievements of the North Vietnamese armed forces in fighting and building in the 4 years of successful resistance against the US war of destruction also opened in Hanoi on the morning of Dec. 22, 1969.

REALIZATION OF STATE PLAN

(Continued from page 1)

badly hit by typhoons and floods for two consecutive years were quickly restored to normal.

With regard to industry and handicrafts, in implementation of the line of socialist industrialization suitable to the specific conditions of North Viet Nam, the key branches of industry under direct management by the central government, continued their development. Meanwhile, local industry also forged ahead, strengthened its connections with, and improved its supplies to, agricultural production in the localities. Gross output value of industry and handicrafts in 1969 increased by nearly 6% over 1968. The growth rate was 6.1% for local industry and 5.5% for handicrafts. Industrial build-up was focused on such branches as coal, power, timber, mechanical construction, building materials which are instrumental in the development of the other branches of the economy. At the same time adequate attention has been paid to promoting consumer goods industry to help raise the people's living standard. In spite of the fact that many power plants and boilers had been damaged by enemy aircraft in the war of destruction, electricity output in 1969 was 34% higher than 1968. Visible advances were also made at many coal mines such as the Deo Nai, Coc 6 and Vang Danh mines. At the open mine-fields of Deo Nai in particular, the plan for coal extraction had been fulfilled by December 6, 24 days ahead of sched-

ule. Many extraction sites, short convoys or mechanical shovel teams in the Quang Ninh colliery also completed their yearly plans before time. The mechanical engineering industry achieved or surpassed its plan for the production of many items such as Diesel motors, transformers, mechanical pumps, rice threshers. Timber extraction increased by nearly 4% over 1968. Many lumber sites made considerable efforts to speed up exploitation and transport. With regard to consumer goods, we gave priority to the processing of food, manufacture of porcelain and pottery, paper, fabrics and rush sleeping mats, and a marked increment was recorded in these branches.

Communication and transport was a branch most heavily attacked by the US during the war of destruction. In 1969 all the road, river and railway transport services made big efforts to put back in order the roads, transport means and bus or railway stations to meet the growing needs in goods, transportation and traffic after peace was restored. The flow of passengers in particular was 50% higher than in 1968. The plan for transportation of imported goods as well as of goods to various localities was successfully carried out. All the localities attached due importance to developing rural communication. The road network between villages, districts and provinces was further extended and perfected. The localities also made fuller use of their own capabilities to carry a higher volume of merchandise compared with the previous years.

There was a greater flow and better distribution of consumer goods. The sale network was further expanded to reach down to each factory, construction site and public office. Many new sale-stands of the State trade service were set up in the industrial centre of Quang Ninh as well as in Haiphong and Hanoi for the benefit of the workers. Many items were rationed. The trade service made it possible to supply commodities to the workers and public employees at stable prices and even at reduced prices with regard to certain daily necessities.

In 1969, culture, education, training of cadres and health preservation continued to develop. Books, newspapers and films were put out in increasing numbers. The mass cul-

ture movement in the localities was further expanded. General education enrolments in 1969-70 rose by 54.5% over 1965-66, especially in the Red River delta provinces and the former Fourth Inter-zone. Sanitation and medical care also made headway. The health network continued to spread at a high rate. Treatment centres were provided with more and better equipment. By the end of 1969, on an average each village in North Viet Nam already had a medical-sanitation station and for every 10,000 inhabitants, 12 hospital beds were available, every 6,500 people had a doctor and every 1,540 people had a mid-level practitioner (middle-level physician or doctor).

Generally speaking, in spite of the difficulties and handicaps of a backward agricultural economy which was in addition ravaged by war and successive natural calamities, the North Vietnamese people steadily satisfied the needs of the front-line while successfully carrying out the State plan and making the growing needs in future development. Together with the defeat of the US war of destruction which forced the US to stop unconditional bombardments against North Viet Nam, the successes in economic rehabilitation and development, in stabilizing the people's living conditions in 1969 were very great and basic achievements of a strategic character.

We are aware that many shortcomings remain and big problems are yet to be solved which require time. The growth rate of production is still low while the needs of the people increase rapidly; there are still weaknesses in economic management, which prevent us from making the most of the great potentialities of our economy etc. At present, the US imperialists are still sticking to their aggressive designs upon our country. For all their "troop cuts", "de Americanisation" and "Vietnamization" of the war, their basic goals remain unchanged. The Vietnamese people will have to continue their fight against US aggression for a long time. As the great rear area of the entire country, North Viet Nam, determined to act upon President Ho Chi Minh's Testament, will go ahead, turn to full account the successes already recorded in order to serve effectively the great front-line, at the same time will step up socialist construction with a view to bringing the resistance to US aggression, for national salvation, to final victory.



An infant class in Mai Lam village, Dong Anh district (Hanoi suburbs)

In July last, in his stop-over in Saigon, US President Nixon extolled Nguyen Van Thieu, chieftain of the Saigon puppet administration, as one of the "four or five most eminent leaders of Asia." This praise is reminiscent of President Johnson's calling Bao Dai "the Winston Churchill of Asia." Thus, in spite of Nixon's incessant propaganda about his "new Asia policy," there is basically no difference between him and Johnson or between the two and their predecessors. They have consistently applied in Viet Nam the neo-colonialism by using a puppet administration as a facade of "nationalism" and "independence" for the US imperialists' expansionist and aggressive aims.

A glance over the past few decades will find ample relevant proof.

AN "EMPEROR" TURNED "HEAD OF STATE"

THE game began in the late forties. It happened when the French colonialists in their bid to reconquer

A MANDARIN MADE PRESIDENT

THE Northern half of Viet Nam was completely liberated. The other half, under the terms of the Geneva Agreements, was put under the administration of the French expeditionary troops and the Bao Dai puppet regime. This was a golden opportunity for Washington to (1) the vacuum and tighten its hold on South Viet Nam. It just wanted to descend the "commonwealth" status on the grab South Viet Nam for itself. To this end, the US had itself prepared a pawn which it had been training at the Mary Knoll Junior Seminary, Wakefield, New Jersey, with Cardinal Spellman as its sponsor, before taking it back to the Viet Nam political stage. The man was Ngo Dinh Diem, a former mandarin of Bao Dai. He was adorned with such high-sounding denominations as "great patriot" and "veteran revolutionary" to pave the way for the Americans to put an "independence" and "freedom" signpost in its future puppet regime. Thus, as the French colonial rule in Indochina was nearing its end, Diem was brought

21st state of the USA when he declared that the border of the United States extended as far as the 17th parallel. The US hopes to create a multi-party reactionary and brutal political atrocity in the South. After the North was completely liberated, the Diem expeditionary troops and the Bao Dai puppet regime became the rallying point for the reactionary forces throughout the country, especially the most reactionary elements of the feudal and comprador capitalist classes. They constituted the hard core on which Diem built up a dictatorial regime that needed the characters of medieval feudalism and modern colonialism in service of the United States. Paced with the only choice, the South Viet Nam people took to arms and rose up against the US-Diem regime. The US had prepared for this eventuality. With a huge war apparatus in South-East Asia as described above, the US needed only to increase the number of military advisers, pump in more dollars and weapons along with setting up a military command under General Paul Harkins called MAAG (in February 1962) staffed by a number of generals even larger than that of the puppet army, to have

hard put to find an efficient servant. The national liberation war of resistance of the South Viet Nam people under the leadership of the NLF drove the US agents into utter isolation. The power struggle in their midst was tougher alternative than to count on a group of "young Turks" who had risen through successive coups and who gradually began to take a legal face in this administration through the fraudulent elections in September 1967. But these names were only a facade for the Nguyen Cao Ky himself, after having been disgraced by his US master, continued to "rule" the country as only a lack of time. Its only merit was to have chosen a corrupt, rotten and weak government which would crumble right away should a revolution break out.

(4). As for the spurious character of the Saigon regime, it was admitted by the puppet army for Bao Dai.

Thieu joined the French army in 1953 and all along the nine years of the Vietnamese people's resistance he fought beside the French against his own people. In 1954 he threw himself body

ists", a thing which even the dictator Ngo Dinh Diem had dared not think of. They sent troops and tanks to crush the rebellions of the opposition forces in Hue and Da Nang in summer 1966 against the puppet government and introduced 125 troops into South Viet Nam "in violation of the sovereignty of Viet Nam".

On February 1966, in Honolulu, Johnson officially gave his blessings to the Thieu-Ky military dictators after lauding them to the skies. The US also sought to put a legal face on this administration through the fraudulent elections in September 1967. But these names were only a facade for the Nguyen Cao Ky himself, after having been disgraced by his US master, continued to "rule" the country as only a lack of time. Its only merit was to have chosen a corrupt, rotten and weak government which would crumble right away should a revolution break out.

Thieu Ky Dictatorial Regime Revealed by American Study Team

THE truth on the dictatorial regime of the US aggressors and their puppets in South Viet Nam and their crimes against the South Vietnamese people have been revealed to some extent in a report by the "US Study Team on Religious and Political Freedom in Viet Nam."

The Study Team included Bishop James Armstrong

of the United Methodist Church, John J. Conners, Representative Rep. Robert F. Drinan, Dean of the Law School, Rabbi Simeon Siegel, Professor of Theology at the Jewish Theological Seminary, and Admiral Arnold E. True, US Navy, retired.

We reprint herewith some excerpts of the report. Sub-heads are ours -Ed.

SAIGON PUPPET REGIME CREATES POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC COLONIALISM

Viet Nam were meeting with the dogged resistance of an entire nation that had vowed to make every sacrifice to independence and freedom. Seeing that the rising tide of the post-war national independence movement, especially in South-East Asia, was irresistible, Washington conceived the idea "to kill two birds with one stone," which would help its double purpose of putting down the national liberation movement in Viet Nam and at the same time ousting France in this country. US imperialism which had been keeping a covetous eye on Viet Nam even while the Second World War was raging, in March 1954, through two US ambassadors - Jefferson Caffery, Paris, and W.C. Bullitt in Geneva - pressed France to restore independence to Bao Dai, the last ruler of the Nguyen dynasty of puppets and traitors. By doing the United States hoped the Vietnamese people would be easily taken in and would lay down their arms and stop fighting on the credulous assumption that their aspiration for independence had been satisfied. On the other hand, the US would play upon the "independence" of Bao Dai to deflect him into the orbit of US imperialism. In February 1956, the US was the first to "recognize" Bao Dai as Viet Nam's "Head of State."

Taking a further step, since 1959 when the French colonialists met with increasing setbacks and had to ask for more and more US aid, Bao Dai, on orders from Washington, urged France to create for his puppet regime an army of its own. Right afterward, on February 12, 1959, US roving Ambassador Philip Jessup prevailed on France to agree to US dispatching to Bao Dai without going through the medium of the French expeditionary corps. This notwithstanding, the Bao Dai regime remained an out-and-out puppet regime. French historian Philippe Devillers, press attaché to General Telleux in the early stage of the Indochinese war, conceded that "it was an absolutely anti-communist regime where under a Vietnamese appearance all key posts remained directly or through men of their own choice in the hands of the French." (1)

However, although the US had defrayed 4/5 of the war expenditures and had even sent US troops to help the French, all its efforts left through with the French failure in the Indochinese war. And the Bao Dai venture also went down together with his failed "independent state."

back and the US compelled France to make him Prime Minister of the Bao Dai administration. If Humphrey, then senator and later US ambassador, had the best hope we have in Viet Nam." If there is no place for two men in the South Viet Nam government, it is Bao Dai who must go.

Then, following a rigged referendum staged by the Americans themselves, Bao Dai was overthrown and Diem proclaimed himself Head of State and South Viet Nam as a "Republic". The late President Kennedy, then a senator, put his finger on the matter in a speech at an American Friends of Viet Nam Convention in June 1957: "If we are not the parents of little Viet Nam, then surely we are the god parents. We presided at its birth, we have given assistance to its life, we have helped to shape its future."

Once Ngo Dinh Diem had been brought to power, the US policy regarding Viet Nam was defined in the clearest terms by J. Foster Dulles in a statement on October 6, 1954. Politically, the USA aims at maintaining and consolidating the Ngo Dinh Diem government. Militarily, it aims at building a better trained and better equipped Vietnamese army. Since then the US had taken over complete control of the puppet administration and played the prop for the realization of its plan to turn this part of Viet Nam into a military base, a staging post, a soldier's camp against the DRV and the socialist camp as a whole and check the excellent national liberation movement in South-East Asia. Since then US neo-colonialism has completely replaced French classical colonialism. With a system of "advisers" blanketing the whole apparatus of the puppet regime at all echelons, and with an enormous aid in dollars and weapons the US had actually made an "iron lung" for the Diem regime. Correspondent Titor Menle has rightly remarked: "Washington is supplying the indispensable oxygen, operating the necessary artificial respiration, and at the same time holding the captive patient and keeping him alive". (2)

The US built in South Viet Nam a network of military bases including air bases, naval bases, military roads. Obedient to US orders, Diem scrapped the Geneva Agreements, refused to hold general elections in the North and the South, and challenged the aspiration of the South Viet Nam population for peace and national reunification. Then turned the southern half of the country into the

at its disposal a complete war machine to conduct a "special war" against the Vietnamese people. That war, as described by Seymour M. Hays, was financed, directed and to a large extent waged by the US, for itself and for its agents (H/FP, April 17, 1964).

In face of the great successes of the Vietnamese people and the revolt of the urban population of all strata against the puppet regime, the US was forced to get rid of Diem through a military coup and his murder.

EX-TROOPERS OF THE FRENCH ARMY BECOME, IN PRESIDENT NIXON'S WORD, "EMINENT LEADERS"

THE Diem regime was overthrown. The "special war" was defeated. The Pentagon now was on the horns of a dilemma to pull out or directly commit US expeditionary troops to South Viet Nam? The White House was also a loss over the use of its straws in Viet Nam: whom must it choose to replace Diem? On the military side, the US chose the expeditionary troops to wage a "local war", almost re-staging the situation prior to 1954.

"American uniforms have been substituted to French uniforms. Orders no longer come from Paris but from Washington... and new invaders who have gone for long by the courteous name of military advisers" now have become real combatants and are Americans". (3)

As for the use of stooges, Washington wanted a stable and legal administration to serve as a screen for the illegal presence of American troops. It tried many of them but failed. In September 1963, the US installed a puppet administration, the so-called "non-partisan military-civilian government" (Nguyen Khanh - Nguyen Ton Hoan) and the military triumvirate (Minh - Binh - Khanh) to the military dictatorship (Nguyen Khanh) then a "civilian government" (Tran Van Huong) and finally a "civilian government with the participation of various political groups" (Phan Huy Quat).

The never-ending crisis of the Saigon regime clearly showed that the US was

and soul in the service of the Diem regime. In 1959 he was made Deputy Chief of Staff and Chief of the Operational Department of the Diem army. He was given the command of the bloody operations aimed at crushing the people's revolts against the US-Diem.

In 1961-1962, as commander of the 1st puppet division, he savagely suppressed the people's revolts against the US-Diem. In 1963, he was named as the State-Taylor plan to concentrate millions of civilians into "strategic hamlets". From 1964-65, he was successively made commander of the 5th Division, Deputy Secretary of Defence, Commander of the 4th Tactical Zone, his hands loathed in the blood of the Mekong Delta population.

And Nguyen Cao Ky - As a lieutenant in the puppet Air Force, in 1964 he was named as the 1st Deputy Chief of the United States. Ky personally took part in many ferocious bombings such as the one on the night of April 2, 1964 when the raiding aircraft under his command dropped to tons of bombs on a village in Kontum province. For this he received a colonelship as reward from the US-Diem. An inborn traitor with odious personal ambitions, he had planned and carried out many coups to worm his way up. On March 31, 1966 he publicly welcomed the introduction of the US troops into South Viet Nam. In 1965, he personally joined in an air raid against North Viet Nam, bombing his own native land.

These faithful mercenaries of two succeeding imperialist powers have set up a bloody dictatorial regime in South Viet Nam. Nguyen Cao Ky once declared: "Do you know who is my hero? I have only one and he is Hitler" (H/FP, July 4, 1965). He also declared that the present situation in South Viet Nam required two or three Hitlers and that he was ready to slaughter tens of thousands of people to defend his regime. He is exactly what Senator Mc Govern described in the *Progressive* (September 1965): "a puppet regime, the senator wrote, see Thieu and Ky" not as patriots, but as the article on the conditions of the puppet regime are willing to slaughter tens of thousands of people to maintain the lawless support of their foreign keeper.

To clear the deck for Johnson to bring troops massively into South Viet Nam and the military command headed by Westmoreland (July 1965), Thieu and Ky proclaimed the state of war and enforced a fascist law - outlawing the Communists and neutral-

ists Committee, on the sending of US troops to South Viet Nam, it acknowledged that "there was no official demand request from any quarters" (5).

The Thieu-Ky regime has engaged deeper and deeper in the path of reaction. If not only supports the US indefinite dragging out of the war of aggression but has also been seeking means to intensify its military effort toward a peaceful settlement of the Viet Nam problem. Throwing on the people the burden of the war, they once denounced at the US pressure to make them come to the four-party conference in Paris. On the other hand, they have been zealously carrying out the US "Vietnamization" of the war. They have taken a series of drastic measures aimed at scraping up money and manpower for the war such as the recent tax rise that has seriously affected the people's life. For their part, like a wicked witch, the US has taken a further step in consolidating a regime which it had never birth to.

In September 1969 the US brought Tran Thien Khanh to the puppet premiership. Tran Thien Khanh was an adoptive son of the tyrant Ngo Dinh Diem and it was Khanh who saved the life of his godfather in the abortive coup in 1963. He was a member of the "Can Lao Nam Vi" (Labour and Personalism) party of Ngo Dinh Nhu, a brother-in-law of Diem. Tran Thien Khanh left Buddhism for Christianity when he was the religion of his godfather. Through foul and fair, he finally managed to rise to generalship under the premiership of the puppet regime. This is no doubt a reward from the US for his service at the puppet regime which he carried out with bloody crimes and shed the whole progressive mankind.

ABOUT the Saigon puppet regime, President Nguyen Huu Tho, President of the President of the Central Committee of the South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation, in his Political Report at the Founding Congress of the Provisional Revolutionary Government in June 1966, said:

"With regard to the so-called Government of the Republic of Viet Nam, its source, its reactionary, fascist and dictatorial character, its rottenness have become evident to our entire people and cleared lighted

These three cases have not been isolated because they are more important than others, but because they are more well known. They are symptomatic of a climate of intellectual, religious and political repression that has led to the imprisonment, exile or silencing of thousands of loyal Vietnamese nationalists, persons who are not pro-Communist, but who are critical of the Thieu-Ky government

POLITICAL OPPRESSION

SPEAKING for peace or in any other way opposing the (Saigon puppet - Ed.) government (in South Viet Nam) easily brings the charge of communist sympathy and subsequent arrest... There must be no illusion that this climate of religious and political suppression is compatible with either a representative or a stable government.

Many persons interviewed argued that President Thieu's government is less repressive than the ten years of brutal intimidation under Ngo Dinh Diem. Others, while agreeing that repression is not as obvious and violent, argued that it is equally pervasive though more subtle today. (Some of the following documentation will indicate that there is still unsavory violent intimidation.)

Three celebrated cases of political arrest have claimed international attention in recent months. They are the cases of Thich Thien Minh, one of the most influential Buddhist monks in South Viet Nam, Tran Thien Khanh, runner-up in the Presidential Election of 1967, and Nguyen Lan, wealthy publisher of the *Saigon Daily News*.

Thich Thien Minh was arrested on February 23, 1969, at the Buddhist Youth Center and charged with "harboring rebels, concealing weapons and illegal documents... harboring deserters and supporting draft dodgers." After appearing before a military field tribunal, he was sentenced to serve terms of ten and five years at hard labour, the sentences to run concurrently. Last month, his sentence was reduced to three years.

It is assumed by many that Thich Thien Minh was arrested not because of the specific crime with which he was charged but for his public criticism of the Thieu-Ky government and his strong advocacy of peace...

Replying to Thich Minh, President Thieu said, "My government can die because of those pacifists, but before we die, they will have to die first."

These three cases have not been isolated because they are more important than others, but because they are more well known. They are symptomatic of a climate of intellectual, religious and political repression that has led to the imprisonment, exile or silencing of thousands of loyal Vietnamese nationalists, persons who are not pro-Communist, but who are critical of the Thieu-Ky government

and who insist upon the right to think for themselves.

The government's sensitivity at this point is revealed in its attitudes toward dissenters, so-called "militant Buddhists", student and intellectuals, political opponents and the press...

Often the Buddhists who protest government policy are students. Following the government-controlled elections of 1967, Buddhist students joined by some of their professors were promptly singled out by the government for retaliatory acts. A professor of law said, "Van Hanh University (Buddhist) was the chief target for attack. If students go to meetings, the police follow them and they can be arrested any time. Many times, they are drafted before the legal age or before their deferments as students expire."

As a result of a peace meeting held in September, 1968, in Saigon University, the Student Union was closed by police. Students, professors, deputies from the Lower House and some Buddhist monks who had participated in the meeting were arrested. More arrests followed.

At about the same time, a student in the Medical School was murdered... He was found dead with his hands tied behind his back, having been pushed from a third floor window. The police called it "probable suicide" and made no investigation.

On Christmas Eve, 2,000 students, many of them Catholic, held a peace procession. In the aftermath, hundreds were arrested.

In spite of setback and discouragement, spirit of the student peace movement remains unbroken. A Buddhist student stepped out of a stiller mass of prisoners at Camp No 7 on Con Son Island and addressed members of the Team. The government translator said, "He is here because he refuses to be drafted. He says he doesn't want to serve the United States. As a Vietnamese citizen he will go into the army only when we have independence..."

President Thieu proudly points to the "new alliance" of political parties in South Viet Nam as an indication of the breadth of his support. This alliance includes the Greater Union Force, the political arm of militant Roman Catholic refugees, the Social Humanist Party, a rebirth of Ngo Dinh Nhu's Can Lao Party, the Dai Viet, a faction of Hoa Hao sect based on the Delta and the Viet Kuomintang. All of these

parties together, combined with the Thieu-Ky vote, failed to capture half of the popular vote in the 1967 elections.

While there is genuine political opposition, most of it has been driven underground. Members of the Study Team met with leaders of five old-line political parties no longer permitted to function as recognized entities. These men had all been active in the resistance movement against the French and were ardent nationalists. Their parties have been outlawed. Their requests to publish a newspaper have gone unanswered and their voices have been muted. Over the past twenty-five years, they have known imprisonment and sacrifice. (A retired general present had been in prison eleven times.)

One further evidence of political oppression is the government's attitude toward the press. Although it seems reasonably tolerant of foreign correspondents, and they are permitted to function without too many instances of censorship, the government's relationship to the Vietnamese press is far more direct and inhibiting. Twelve months ago government press was officially eliminated in South Viet Nam. Since then, at least twenty-five newspapers and two magazines have been suspended. Mr. Lau's *Daily News* has been suspended for thirty days for hinting that Thich Thien Minh's trial might have been unfair. *Tin Sang* was closed when it suggested that Prime Minister Huong once yielded to pressure in a cabinet appointment. Nguyen Thanh Tai, a U/P combat photographer, was arrested in May, 1968, for taking pictures "detrimental" to South Viet Nam.

One of the most credible and influential anti-government nationalist leaders with whom we talked prepared a three-page position paper for the Team. In part, he said, "The range of political expression as legally exists here is narrow indeed..."

One student leader who had been imprisoned twice by the Thieu government for his activities on behalf of peace argued that no truly representative democracy can come into being as US troops are present and US policy is being enforced. He said, "By now, we should have learned the irony of having any Vietnamese government that is embraced by the US power. The Americans must be leaving us to decide our own future."

(To be continued)

The Whole World Sides With Us

World Peace Council's Viet Nam Statement

THE meeting of the World Peace Council convened from Dec. 13 to 15 in Khartoum, a statement on the Viet Nam question which was high up on its agenda.

The meeting was attended by over 80 representatives and members of the WPC Presidency, representatives of more than 30 countries, and 8 international organizations.

The statement said in part:

"PRESIDENT Nixon, in his November 3 speech and in his recent press conference, has shown his extremely perfidious and obdurate nature. On the one hand, he has been intensifying and enlarging the Viet Nam war, and has taken the first step in sabotaging the Paris conference, and on the other hand has resorted to the deception of the public opinion in the US through false peace initiatives. Nixon has been trying at all costs to stick to the Saigon puppet

administration and pursue the war with his 'Vietnamization', by using Vietnamese to fight Vietnamese and replacing American troops by Vietnamese soldiers. More over, the US has been stepping up hostilities against Laos and provocations against the Kingdom of Cambodia."

The statement stressed: "The World Peace Council calls on all peace organizations and international democratic organizations, peace and justice-loving people to push up their campaigns for a US halt of its aggression in South Viet Nam, a rapid and unconditional withdrawal of all American and satellite troops from South Viet Nam and for the Vietnamese people to settle their own affairs without foreign interference, to intensify activities under arms, in each country and on the Viet Nam front, against US war crimes and to coordinate the movement for solidarity with Viet Nam in various countries with the anti-war movement in the United States."

Tricontinental Organisation Scores US Aggression

ON December 12, the Permanent Secretariat of the Tricontinental Solidarity Organisation issued an appeal calling for the world peoples' interest support for the Vietnamese people and condemnation of the US war of aggression in Viet Nam and US crimes in South Viet Nam. The appeal said:

"ON the occasion of the 50th founding anniversary of the South Viet Nam NLF, let us impel forward our action:

— to severely condemn the dirty US war of aggression in South Viet Nam and the Nixon administration's perfidious and pernicious 'Vietnamization of the war', a policy intended to prolong the US war of aggression and drag out US military occupation and neo-colonialist domination of South Viet Nam;

— to support the legitimate resistance of the Viet-

namese people against the US imperialism, for national salvation, increase material and moral support to the South Vietnamese to help their fight forward;

— to press with firmness for the US government's serious response to the point overall solution proposed by the NLF and the WPC of the Republic of South Viet Nam; and to its satellites from South Viet Nam and letting the South Vietnamese people settle their own affairs, without foreign interference;

— to support and coordinate action with the Fall Offensive of the American people against the Nixon administration of the war of aggression and the withdrawal of US troops from South Viet Nam.

News from LAOS

TROOPS KNOCKED OUT OF LAOS

THE Laotian patriotic armed forces in November, the first month of the dry season in Laos, successfully beat off enemy encroaching operations in the free zone, putting off of action more than 2,000 enemy troops, nearly twice as many as in the corresponding period last year, KPL reported. They also captured 400 guns of various kinds and 29 radio-transmitters, and destroyed 10 military vehicles, and a large quantity of military equipment.

In Xieng Khoang where the enemy concentrated one-third of the rightist army and 40 per cent of the plane sorties, the patriots inflicted on the enemy 981 casualties and seized 163 guns.

Besides, in fighting off enemy operations against Nong Het, Xendou, Nongsamche and international democratic organizations, peace and justice-loving people to push up their campaigns for a US halt of its aggression in South Viet Nam, a rapid and unconditional withdrawal of all American and satellite troops from South Viet Nam and for the Vietnamese people to settle their own affairs without foreign interference, to intensify activities under arms, in each country and on the Viet Nam front, against US war crimes and to coordinate the movement for solidarity with Viet Nam in various countries with the anti-war movement in the United States."

THE W. BRANDT GOVERNMENT AND THE VIET NAM PROBLEM

ON October 28 last, W. Brandt, West German government, made public his program of action. While giving ambiguous views on such problems as the relations of the Federal Republic with the GDR and East Europe, and the countries, which smacked of continued revanchism and claim to be the sole representative of the German nation, W. Brandt proved himself an arch-reactionary with regard to the Viet Nam problem.

He hoped that the Viet Nam war would be ended by a political settlement agreeable to all 'parties concerned', that is, on the American aggressors' terms. He also disclosed the ambition of expansionist West Germany to take part in the

rehabilitation of the "two Koreas" of Viet Nam, but he kept mum about the pockets of millions of marks pocketed each year by West German firms in the manufacture of chemical weapons for the US troops in South Viet Nam, and about the West German technicians, military advisers and soldiers donning American uniforms, who are now taking part in the slaughter of the South Vietnamese people.

The Bonn Chancellor ever since has said no word about the Son My massacre, a crime abhorred by the whole of mankind. On the contrary, he was one of the first to welcome Nixon's Nov. 3 speech, whose terms he called the American aggressors' terms. He also disclosed the ambition of expansionist West Germany to take part in the

US Public Urges Cessation of the War of Aggression

● On December 16, large crowds of American Viet Nam war protesters gathered near the White House and chanted: "Stop the war!" "Immediate peace!"

● At a press conference on December 10 in Washington, Congressman Lowenstein declared that to settle peace-

fully, the patriots destroyed many tanks and 2 assaulted the illegal occupants of Sethamok, and Vajapao, and hunted for bandits around Muong Phin, wiping out 126 of them.

In Saravane, the patriots on November 3 assailed the headquarters of Battalion B.S.202, killing or wounding 120 adverse soldiers.

On November 18, 19 and 21, they disabled 140 more enemy troops in Talco and other areas.

Also last month, the patriotic armed forces in Burikhanas province recaptured several areas serving as starting bases for enemy encroachment on the liberated zone. On November 6, they inflicted 84 casualties.

In Udomsay, while intercepting the enemy in Pakbeng, the patriots destroyed many posts held by bandits or commandos, and liberated a village with more than 1,000 inhabitants.

2,000 ENEMY

chongmong, Phoukhamkhom and Banka areas.

The enemy was frightened out of many places, such as the Xieng Khoang provincial capital, Lathou, Phouphou, Phouloung, Thallmon, etc.

Meanwhile, in Savannakhet province, the patriots on November 1 and 2 assaulted the illegal occupants of Sethamok, and Vajapao, and hunted for bandits around Muong Phin, wiping out 126 of them.

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THE Long An all-omen artillery platoon is one of many of its kind formed in early Spring 1969 in South Viet Nam. From a squad, it has grown into a platoon and the women have bravely fought hundreds of battles. Some images of their life and actions have been

recorded in a documentary bearing their unit's name produced by Liberation Film Studio. The film won a special prize awarded by the WIDE at the recent 12th Leipzig International Film Week.

The following story is told by cameraman Tran Huu Hanh. — Ed.

LEAVING the district's main road, we struck the footpath to hamlet C, some 3 kilometers from the enemy post. Maybe because it was a staging area, the enemy kept up his regular artillery barrages, at least twice a day, in the sky.

The aircraft of different types cruised without a break. They had dumped all the area thousands of tons of bombs. As many as 5 bomb craters were seen around the hamlet.

The bamboo groves around orchards looked desolate. As I walked along my mind turned to the unit we were going to meet for the shooting of the film.

"Hi, brother, you're back again!"

An ivory white-faced young girl, about 18, not very tall, ran towards us, cheerfully.

Cay, commander of the artillery unit who was accompanying us, with pleasure introduced us to her.

"Here is Thang, deputy squad leader, who's taken part in over 30 shelling attacks and who is the unit's first woman gunner."

"Oh, no!" she demurred, then looked the other way.

Arriving at the troop encampment, I caught a glimpse of the young girls at the 13 young, 2000-natured women gunners. They were doing needlework, reading books or making entries in their diaries. Some put their heads together, then giggled at us.

Since its formation, the unit had fought hundreds of battles and, from a squad, it had grown into a platoon. Thang joined the outfit when the widespread offensives and concerted uprisings of the South Vietnamese armed forces and people erupted.

In a few days, dozens of girls followed suit. They were formerly district liaison agents, medical nurses or village guerrillas. Some had just left their families. All were under 21 except one 24-year-old Tuyet, the youngest of all, would be 17 this year.

In less than a week, they got some rudiments about the characteristics and utility of the gun and learnt how to operate it. Then came the battle, although some still needed further training. Their baptism of fire came when they mounted a daylight shelling attack on Kinh Xang post. Their guns boomed amidst the thundering of the enemy's heavy artillery.

At the same conference, Gottlieb, member of the National Council of SANE (Struggle for a Sane Nuclear Policy) made known that this organisation had begun to publish a series of postal cards to be sent to Nixon urging him to put an end to the war of aggression in Viet Nam.

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then flew away. Its dropping was still audible when the chief commander gave the combat order.

The women battery leaders shouted their own orders live picture. The blazing flames amidst the dull colours of this crepuscular moment illuminated the tragic fate of the enemy, and the picture had been painted by the women gunners. Before paying for their crimes, the enemy could only fire back a few propellants which exploded nearly 100 metres from our position. Our women, calm and firm, kept pumping incendiary shells into the midst of the enemy without the last hesitation.

"Target Enemy Post, 1,200 metres!"

"Fire!"

The boom rent the air. The gun tubes shot out streams of deep red flames over a metre long. Smoke rose in front of the camera. Amidst the dim explosions, I could hear Nhu's camera functioning regularly.

We approached a battery for a close-up. The boom denuded our ears and rocked the whole area. The first barrage over, I looked in

a word. I clearly realised that he was trying to compose himself so as to record the inhuman and grieved look and fearful eyes on the face of every woman gunner present at the memorial ceremony as well as their angry expressions before they went into battle.

A few days later, we took a short leave of the unit to go and photograph the surrounding landscape. After many night marches, Nhu looked haggard.

In a hoarse voice, he frankly told me: "Every time I go and make a film, I always run into such moving scenes which wring my heart."

I now was in a position to see why he had been so moved by such realistic and striking sequences.

We rejoined the unit...

The first position of the male mortars received a finishing touch when the sun began to dawn behind the shabby bamboo groves. The chief commander glanced at his wrist watch. The women gunners cast their eyes at the position of the friendly unit, ready for a well-coordinated action. All were in full preparedness. Our impatience grew as the sun was setting and there would not be enough light for our pictures. Standing behind the commander, I looked in the direction of the enemy post. I caught sight of a block of corrugated iron houses with a high watchtower in the middle, as still as death. I imagined in a few moments, the whole of this enemy structure would come under fire as our women gunners started moving the shells and stacked them up next to their mortars with their muzzles already trained on the enemy post. Nhu was still busy looking for a vantage point for the shooting. He signed to me that the gunners were about to open up. In this tense moment, the women gunners, Mai, Tuyet, Nhu, this slender girl in her deep blue pyjama and with a cap on, her hair hanging down over her back and slightly fluttering in the breeze, was standing still like a statue, and riveting her eyes on the target with suppressed anger. Battery leader Lan looked stern and confident. She was waiting for the signal from the commander. Not a sound was heard except the faint rustling of the fire barrage would begin in the next 30 seconds. From the Southeastern side, a recon plane dropped in. In next to no time, the whole position was camouflaged. The plane made a circle

the direction of the enemy post and black smoke only columns of black smoke rising up into the air. Flames rose higher and higher. I was standing before a live picture. The blazing flames amidst the dull colours of this crepuscular moment illuminated the tragic fate of the enemy, and the picture had been painted by the women gunners. Before paying for their crimes, the enemy could only fire back a few propellants which exploded nearly 100 metres from our position. Our women, calm and firm, kept pumping incendiary shells into the midst of the enemy without the last hesitation.

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The boom rent the air. The gun tubes shot out streams of deep red flames over a metre long. Smoke rose in front of the camera. Amidst the dim explosions, I could hear Nhu's camera functioning regularly.

We approached a battery for a close-up. The boom denuded our ears and rocked the whole area. The first barrage over, I looked in

a word. I clearly realised that he was trying to compose himself so as to record the inhuman and grieved look and fearful eyes on the face of every woman gunner present at the memorial ceremony as well as their angry expressions before they went into battle.

A few days later, we took a short leave of the unit to go and photograph the surrounding landscape. After many night marches, Nhu looked haggard.

In a hoarse voice, he frankly told me: "Every time I go and make a film, I always run into such moving scenes which wring my heart."

I now was in a position to see why he had been so moved by such realistic and striking sequences.

We rejoined the unit...

The first position of the male mortars received a finishing touch when the sun began to dawn behind the shabby bamboo groves. The chief commander glanced at his wrist watch. The women gunners cast their eyes at the position of the friendly unit, ready for a well-coordinated action. All were in full preparedness. Our impatience grew as the sun was setting and there would not be enough light for our pictures. Standing behind the commander, I looked in the direction of the enemy post. I caught sight of a block of corrugated iron houses with a high watchtower in the middle, as still as death. I imagined in a few moments, the whole of this enemy structure would come under fire as our women gunners started moving the shells and stacked them up next to their mortars with their muzzles already trained on the enemy post. Nhu was still busy looking for a vantage point for the shooting. He signed to me that the gunners were about to open up. In this tense moment, the women gunners, Mai, Tuyet, Nhu, this slender girl in her deep blue pyjama and with a cap on, her hair hanging down over her back and slightly fluttering in the breeze, was standing still like a statue, and riveting her eyes on the target with suppressed anger. Battery leader Lan looked stern and confident. She was waiting for the signal from the commander. Not a sound was heard except the faint rustling of the fire barrage would begin in the next 30 seconds. From the Southeastern side, a recon plane dropped in. In next to no time, the whole position was camouflaged. The plane made a circle

the direction of the enemy post and black smoke only columns of black smoke rising up into the air. Flames rose higher and higher. I was standing before a live picture. The blazing flames amidst the dull colours of this crepuscular moment illuminated the tragic fate of the enemy, and the picture had been painted by the women gunners. Before paying for their crimes, the enemy could only fire back a few propellants which exploded nearly 100 metres from our position. Our women, calm and firm, kept pumping incendiary shells into the midst of the enemy without the last hesitation.

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28 Units and 23 Fighters Cited "Heroes of the People's Liberation Armed Forces"

THE HEROIC MILITARY HEROISM BECOMES A ROUTINE STYLE OF LIFE OF THE MASSES

By a decree dated November 11 last, the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Viet Nam has recently conferred the "Hero of the PLAF" title on 28 units and 23 fighters for most remarkable feats of arms on various theatres of operations during the last few years.

The regular troops were represented by 14 hero units and fighters, the regional troops and the village or district para-military forces by 7 outfits and fighters.

Beside the infantry which collected most honours, there were among the newly commended many combatants of the artillery, engineering corps, communications and transport service, task force etc..

All the battle fronts had their shares: 4 units and 4 fighters of the Highway 9; Khe Sanh front; respectively 8 and 1 of the Tri-Thien-Hue front; 5 and 6 of the Central Truong Bo; 2 and 1 of the Southern Truong Bo; 5 and 3 of the Eastern Nam Bo; 2 and 5 of Saigon-Gia Dinh; and one unit each of the Central Nam Bo and the Western Nam Bo.

Besides, among the recipients were commanders and political commissars from squad to regimental levels, cadres of village militia and simple guerrillas. There was also a woman from the 5 new, from the mountain national minorities, a veteran guerrilla of 63, the oldest of all.

Those units and fighters were the flowers of the patriotic movement of the South Vietnamese people who have been waging a stubborn and relentless fight against foreign colonial aggression, virtually since the landing in our country of the first "marines" of colonialism in the middle of the last century. Thus, battalions Y, A and C, companies 27.3 etc., of the main-force troops have, during the

last two years distinguished themselves by powerful weapons which paralyzed and neutralized all enemy resistance, inflicting irreparable losses with stunning blows dealt at the most unexpected moments and the rawest points.

The honored units of the regional forces, as well as the village para-military forces were typical symbols of the vast guerrilla movement which involves practically all men and women of all ages, the people's war that strangles, paralyzes and depletes the enemy everywhere he goes and makes possible uprisings of the masses in occupied zones.

The individuals who received citations were elite fighters animated by an ardent patriotism, a steel will, unqualified dedication, a great intelligence which is many times magnified by an implacable hatred for the enemy, devoting soul and body to the cause. They had been deeply attached to their men, their comrades and the people by ties which exist only in the revolutionary army, fused from the people and fighting for the people. For instance, Nguyen Thi Lai, a young woman village militia cadre near Hue, had to her credit 200 American and puppet casualties, 20 US warships, Nam, a squad leader of the army transport service, from an ethnic minority in the mountain region, in 7 years made unending trips along a most impassable jungle tracks during more than 2,000 days and nights, carrying on his shoulders a quantity of military supplies equivalent to the load of 35 trucks. Old Ho Van Hien, 63, had always been the very embodiment of patriotic emulation,

especially in the making of primitive but highly efficient weapons and enemy mine roads. By means of mines manufactured by himself and steel spikes cleverly laid, he had destroyed two armoured cars and killed or wounded 67 adverse troops.

THE new batch of PLAF "Heroes," the third so far, were the most outstanding representatives of those responsible for the success of the national resistance of the Vietnamese people against US aggression in South Viet Nam since the start of the general offensives and uprisings in the Lunar New Year in 1968, while the lineers in 1965 had marked the victory of the patriotic forces over the US "special war" and those in 1967 the failure of the initial stage of the US "local war".

The war waged by our compatriots in the Southern part of our country has been a great epic of revolutionary heroism. Confronted with the imperialist chieftain which has been conducting the biggest war of aggression in our era, they remain undaunted, do not shrink back before threats, always toughen their determination to fight, have won and will certainly win. In spite of its 1.2 million troops armed to the teeth the US imperialism has been driven into passivity and onto the defensive on all theatres of operation and their "local war" strategy has landed definitely in a complete impasse.

This exploit which is astonishing the whole world can be ascribed first of all to the judicious political and military line of the NLF and the heroism displayed by millions of people in the South in putting this creative line into practice. It is the legacy of invaluable experiences in the fight for the defending and building of the country handed down by our

forefathers through our millenary history, experiences which have been enriched by the August Revolution in 1945 and the first Nationwide Resistance in 1945-1954. It is a great stimulus which has aroused and promoted the patriotic zeal of each Vietnamese, an indestructible trait that cements our whole nation in the common fight for national salvation. Stimulating into combined strength, which results from the application of this sound line, the American war machine which not a few well-meaning persons think invincible has broken down.

By putting a landmark to an important phase of the successful people's war, the choice of a new contingent of Heroes of the PLAF spelled out the fact that if the imperialist war machine is to survive, its authors and gives free vent

to their bestial instincts, of which the Son My massacre is only one of the innumerable instances, the just fight for the defence of national independence, freedom, the revolutionary gains and human dignity brings into full play the finest qualities of man and ennobles mankind.

And when revolutionary heroism has become a routine style of life of so large a portion of the people as is the case of South Viet Nam, the fate of the aggressors is irrevocably sealed: the continuation of a vicious circle represented by the "Vietnamisation of the war" following the "de-Americanization of the war" definitely cannot be a life-buoy for the US imperialists as Nixon is trying to make others believe, because his "Vietnamisation" plan is, in the final analysis, only a means to prosecute the war with local cannon-fodder.

MILITARY OPERATIONS

GUERRILLA WARFARE STEPPED UP ON ALL FRONTS

In Quang Tri province, the guerrillas' activities have continued to intensify (substituted for Leather-seals) to fall back to their defensive positions along strategic Road No. 9. In the first half of December 1969 alone, too of them were put out of action.

In the Western High Plateaux, regional troops harassed the enemy on Roads No. 19 and 14 and stormed the military training centre near Da Lat (Dec. 7) and the rear-base of puppet Regiments 53. The guerrillas checked a sortie of enemy troops at Duc Lap and inflicted on them too casualties (Dec. 17).

Meanwhile, many engagements took place in Eastern Nam Bo between regional PLAF and enemy forces. In Phuoc Long province, 858 adverse troops were wiped out of action 14 companies wiped out and 22 armoured cars destroyed at Huu Lap, Duc Hiep and along Route No. 14. At Binh Long on Dec. 10, 13, 14, 16 and 18, 11 enemy soldiers were killed or wounded and 16 tanks and armoured carriers wrecked. In Tay Ninh province, on Dec. 6 and 8, 11 choppers were downed by the guerrillas who inflicted losses on the enemy.

In the Mekong Delta, the guerrillas and regional troops also achieved many exploits. Early in December, 400 enemy troops were put out of action north of Long An

and 4 vessels sent to the bottom. In the same period, the enemy took 650 casualties in Can Tho, An Giang and Kien Phong provinces.

Coastal areas from Quang Nam to Binh Thuan were the activities of the guerrillas who victoriously repelled enemy sweeps and made successful attacks. From Dec. 2 to 6, the PLAF in Binh Thuan province stormed 25 positions, inflicted 405 casualties on the enemy, destroyed big quantities of war materials including 17 tanks and armoured cars, 9 cannons and howitzers. At Phu Yen, a PLAF attack on Vung Ro naval base on Dec. 9 put too enemy troops out of action. The PLAF at Binh Thuan recorded an outstanding exploit on Dec. 16: in an engagement lasting three hours, the guerrillas control of the greater part of An Phuoc military training centre, 4 km northwest of Phuoc Ninh town, inflicted 600 enemy casualties including many American advisors, demolished or burnt down 50 barracks, destroyed a big quantity of weapons and war materials. Significant enough, the attack was mounted in an area considered by the US and puppet commanders to be the "strong town," enemy bases and urban centres to be pounded by PLAF artillery such as Saigon (Dec. 17). Ten Ser Vung airplane and US Land Force HQ (Dec. 10) and other towns.

SAIGON POLITICAL SCENE AGAIN IN A TURMOIL

In the last few weeks, the Saigon regime's ugliness and rottenness has become more apparent. The puppet Nguyen Van Thieu has many times hurled insults at his opponents. After exhausting his arsenal of vulgarities, he had demonstrations staged to support his scheme to discard all those who did not see eye to eye with him. After holding four meetings on Dec. 22, his men broke into the rubber-stamp "National Assembly" when it was in session; they rant and raged, tansacked it and surrounded demonstrators. "MPs" of the opposition accused by Thieu of main-

taining contacts with the NLF.

These acts of hooliganism of the Saigon junta stirred up strong protests from public opinion and "MPs" in Saigon. Under veiled or subtle forms, the press has stigmatized Nguyen Van Thieu as a running dog and lackey of the Americans as he had called his opponents "dogs" and threatened to beat them. On December 18, the "free press" castigated Thieu's words as "irresponsible and inconsiderate" (NLF). Opposition mounted after the Thieu-sponsored demonstrations. According to Renter

of December 22, most of the "MPs" condemned them as a Thieu's move to "lay the ground for a dictatorial regime" and demanded that Thieu be tried for high treason.

Day after day, the "national and democratic" signboard of the Saigon regime has revealed its spurious nature. The Saigon political scene has been in an utter confusion and the quings have been trying hard to eliminate one another for selfish ends. The White House has left no stone unturned to prop up

(Continued page 7)